The Malignants Conventicle:

OR,

A learned Speech ſpoken by M. VV E B, a Citizen, to the reſt of his Society,

Which did conſiſt of { *Citizen-Malignants, Papiſts,* } { *Prieſts, Apprentices, Wenches.* }

At their common Tavern meeting-houſe in *Lincolnes* Inne-fields.

In which are many things very neceſſary to be obſerved, and of ſo great concernment, that if you will not believe, then take what followes: For now all is out.

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THE Malignants Conventicle:

OR,

A learned Speech ſpoken by M. WEB, a Citizen, to the reſt of his Society, at their common Tavern meeting-houſe in Lincolns-Inne-fields.

Gentlemen,

Have a great matter to impart unto you, therfore I pray you prepare your eares to attend what I ſhall ſay, we are none here (I hope) but ſuch as are faithfull.

You may remember that at our firſt meeting we adventured on a far more dangerous work then now we ſail by: The Cavaliers were not then ſo well backt with a popiſh Army, that will ſtand ſure to us againſt the King and Parliament, and all the honeſt profeſſors of the truth in the City, but now they are grown ſtrong, and that diſtracts the Parliament, and makes all the true Proteſtants in the City at their wits end; You know how carefull I have been to accompliſh the expectation of all our hopes, though our bad cauſe hath had as bad ſucceſſe, yet let us not leave off: for if ever we do but gaine an opportunity to plunder the City, our crackt fortunes may gaine eſtates, and though we are now ſo poore that all we about an hundred of us, are not able to pay for theſe two gallons of Wine we have called for, but muſt ſcore for one of them, yet would that prey repleniſh all our wants and fill our purſes.

Gentlemen, I know you expect that I ſhould ſpeake ſomthing of what is paſt, and therein I ſhall endeavour to give you the beſt ſatisfaction I can: You know what faire promiſes Father *Andrewes* and Father *Bul-*

Lock and the reſt of the Prieſts and Fryers made us if we could perfect this moſt damnable deſigne they ſet us on, beſides the great rewards of many; you know that my Brother Toll-taker is to be quaſterer to the new Cardinall, and my Brother Cheeſe-monger the Clarke of the Kitchen; the bonny Porter ſhall be made a great Doctor by a ſpeciall Writ: and his coſen *Iohn* the Cardinals chiefe Secretary, and for the reſt you know what was faithfully promiſed, though they never meane to pay it; Brethren, you know our caſe is deſperate; therefore deſperate deſignes doe beſt befit us, if we ever expect advancement.

You know the firſt deſigne was to frame a cunning Petition in preſence of peace, to gaine an opportunity of mutiny in the City, and this was carried very diſcreetly, we got many thouſand of hands to it in a ſhort time, for we made them believe (poore ſimple fooles) that it was for peace, and there were (as we thought) three quarters of the City ready to back us, for trading was growne dead in the City, and the Parliament cauſed them to pay money for their own good and ſafety, and gladly might they pay it to prevent us if they underſtood themſelves well, what with our diſſembling words, and what with our fained hands we flattered, and forged names enough to our Petition, and with a goodly attendance we came to *Guild-Hall*, with good cudgells in our hands, we paſſed the guard of Souldiers, and entred the Hall, and thinking the City to be our owne, wee fell upon the Souldiers and beat them terribly, and had not thoſe without broke in upon us, we had gone up to the Parliament men that was above with the Aldermen, and we had made a bloody day of it, but when we ſaw that our ſide was not ſo ſtrong as we expected, we was faine to runne ſome one way, ſome another to hide us any where, yet ſome very manfully ſtayed and delivered the Petition, and it was read, but here was the miſchiefe of it, the cunning pates that read it diſcovered all our intents, and underſtood by the Petition that we did but jeare the City with it; and ſo they ſent us away like fooles as we came, and ſome of us were committed to Priſon as we juſtly deſerved; For I muſt confeſſe unto you Gentlemen, that it went extreamly againſt my conſcience, and ſo it did ſtill, to abuſe the Parliament: but what will not ſuch deſperate men as we are do for hope of profit and honour? This makes us forget religion, love, liberty, conſcience, and all that doth not conduce to our profit. Nay they were ſo cunning to diſcern that we would have peace without truth, and indeed you know it was ſo, for we did not deſire truth, onely pretended to deſire peace, aiming neither at peace nor truth. Deſire truth! No: if you would

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have the truth of it, we could wish that all truth and Peace were at an end in the City, that we might come to plundering and pillaging, for there lies our hopes, if we could once set them together by the Eares, we would part the spoyle.

Gentlemen, you know that when this project had so bad an issue, we caused our Apprentizes to combine as we did before them, that they might see if they could cozen the Parliament by violent petitioning, we our selves would be neare hand, if they wanted aid, and indeed poor silly soules they were as earnest for us as we could desire, they got thousands of Hands to their Petition presently, and to *Westminster* they went severall times with it, and stood so stoutly to our Treachery, that they were ready to fall foule on most religious Members of both Houses, they cryed for Peace on any tearmes, Peace, nothing but Peace, for you know if the Parliament would let our Cavaliers have Peace on what tearmes they would, then they would (as we) give them good words till we had gained an opportunity to take away all that they have from them, then we would advance our fortunes, inrich our selves, and murder them; then *Nine-penny-Moll*, nor you *Sarah*, nor my Cozen *Besse* there, would command us, as we how are glad to subject to you, but the spruce Citizens Wives and daughters should satisfie the lust both of them and us, as the Northern Lasses have done to some of them already.

Well our poor prentizes had but a cold Answer, the House found that it was but a falllacy, and respected them accordingly, and our hopes was twarted in this also.

So we drew up a most damnable abusive Booke amongst our selves, to scandalize the Parliament, I know you have all seen it, it is called the Cities Complaint to the House of Commons, &c. This Booke we got a foolish Printer that did not know what he did, to print, for it was such a most wicked, invective Pamphlet, that had he had either Conscience, Religion, Obedience, or humanity, if he knew what it was, he would not have meddled with it, nor indeed would I Gentlmen, had I any other hopes to rest on.

But we got it perfected, and thousands of them printed, and it beguiled the Affections of many, and was applauded, and generally amongst our brethern malignants, and Newtrals believed, wee scattered them about the Pallace at Westminster, about the Hall, and in the City, and did it so cunningly, that we were none of us taken, only the Printer was suspected, and sent for, but we got him off, because he so handsomly fained the Authour thereof to be a particular man, slipt out of the way, and so it was husht over, then we fell to printing of them again, and got some spending money,

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by them, which hath kept us ever ſince, but here was a miſchiefe fell out in this too, for ſome cunning pate or other hath put the ſame Title upon an other Pamphelet that diſcovered all our knavery, and did us as much hurt as our owne did us good; ſurely God is againſt us, for we ſtrive directly againſt the preſcript rule me are taught in his holy word. But let us not be weary, but runne till we come to the end of the Race, perhaps we may win the Garland, but I muſt tell you it is very unlikely.

I know you are not ignorant how my brother *Towler* plaid Bo-peepe with them, when he runne like a hunted Hare, (being the more fearefull becauſe his Conſcience ſmote him, for his knavery) but he was taken and carried to Priſon (as well he deſerved, and my brother Cheeſmonger was as faithfull as he, for he had furniſhed his houſe with good ſtore of Ammunition for our deſigne, if ever we gaine an opportunity to plunder, but I know not how God that brings all wickedneſſe to light, in due time diſcovered that to the Parliament, and it was all taken, and we deprived of him too.

Afterwards we wrote two pretended Speeches, one of the Earl of *Pembrokes*, the other the Lord *Brooks*, and ſold three times as many of them as of the former, nay we forged the Clearke of the Parliaments hand to it, and an order for thanks be given to the Lord *Brooke* for the ſame, and this project tooke bravely, for there were thouſands in the City did verrily believe it to be true, but at laſt it was diſcerned, and the Printer committed, but this buſineſſe paſſed well, if I may call it well, being ſuch a baſe Action.

The Cavaliers by this time in the Countries were confident that we had made London our owne, and ſo we our ſelves thought too, but that our conſciences told us that ſuch courſes could never proſper.

They fell to pillaging, robing, and killing the Country Proteſtants, and hearkning dayly when an opportunity would envite them to London, but amongſt the reſt of the Cavaliers that came from Oxford into Nottingham ſhire, were baſely ſerved at a little Village neare Newarke upon Trent, there was about forty of them that had made a vow to raviſh all the pretty maids in the Towne, this Proteſtation they made at an Ale-houſe in Newarke, and was over heard by a Boy that drew Beere in the houſe, who went to this Village, and gave the People of the Towne notice thereof. The Cavaliers not knowing hereof went upon their deſigne, and when they came thither they eſpied a very handſome nut-brown Laſſe, ſtanding near a great houſe that was at the Townes end, who ſeeing of them come towards her took ſanctuary in the houſe: and about twenty of the Cavaliers after her, expecting that they had gotten a prize, but when they were come into the Hall, they found above forty good ſtout fellowes that were ready pro-

vided for them, who ſhut faſt the doore, and cudgelled them ſoundly, that they were not able neither to go nor ſtand, ſo that they had little liſt afterwards to wenching; the other twenty hearing them cry out ran all away, fearing they were betrayed (for the leaſt ſuſpition in the world feares an ill cauſe) and about halfe a mile off they came to a Farmers houſe, which ſtood at the end of another little village, where was no body at home but the good wife and her maid, who ſeeing them come, left their dairy and went into the Town, the mean while the Cavaliers ſeized upon their Butter-milk and curds and whay and creame, and ſuch white meat as was in the dairy-houſe, where they filled their bellies ſo full that they could ſcarce go, and when they had done, carried with them ſuch Hens and Ducks and other poultry as they could well, for indeed their bellies were ſo full they could ſcarce carry themſelves.

At laſt the good wife was returned with her maid and above forty women with her, for the men were ſoon gone to the other village to prevent the plot, and the reſt were at plow, or ſome husbandmens labour; and all the Cavaliers were gone out of the Dairy-houſe, but one of the women eſpied two or three of them together untruſſing in a ditch, who lay as cloſe as they could for feare the women ſhould ſpy them, ſhe gave notice to the reſt, who fell upon them with Spits, Forks, Racks, Spades, Staves, and ſuch weapons as they could get, and baſted them welfavouredly, and the Buttermilk and Whay did ſo worke with them, that they were ſo troubled with the ſquirt, that the women traſed them by the ſmell, and ſo met with moſt of them, for they were not able to fly faſt before them, ſo that they were ſoundly paid before they get to *Newarke*, and had little liſt to boaſt of their ſucceſſe, or to attempt the like after.

But to go on concerning our proceedings here, you know there was a Common-Hall called at *Guild-Hall*, and we did hope then to have cryed downe the Lord Major: and to have raiſed a mutiny againſt the Parliament men that came thither, my coſen *Iohn* he was appointed to ſtand in the Court yard, and raile againſt the Lord Major and the reſt, and call them Traytors; and curſe them ſoundly, which he performed excellent well, and indeed had many fell in to ſide with him as he thought, but one that knowes him (who hates our baſe courſes) took notice of him, and hath diſcovered him, and I feare he will be apprehended if he do not fly for it, therefore we muſt be carefull to cheriſh him all we can, leaſt he diſcover us, and ſo we be all hanged for abuſing the King and Parliament, and indeed the whole Kingdome.

We had a great deale of care to take the opportunity of this day, we had many ſcouts, and prevailed with ſome Common-counſell-men to be ready

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to assist us in the making of an uproare; which was attempted at the first, but soon dasht againe, and (indeed) whereas we thought to gaine a great advantage that day, our bad cause sustained losse.

Such care had we to make all things sure that we went to the Brokers, and hired Gownes that we might be entertained like Common-councell-men of the City without suspition, and there we rusht in and stood amongst them in our borrowed Gownes (I wonder indeed that the Broakers would trust us, it may be that they will want the returne of some of them) but here was a mischiefe befell us too, for the Proctor was known, and is like to answer for it: I tell you Gentlemen, me thought when we were in our grave fur'd gownes, that we were in too good a posture to betray, or to do the least hurt to an honest cause, as you know theirs is; I know not (what was the cause) but I am sure that we were ashamed of our cause, and so we shall ever be, we did as much as nothing.

Yet I conceive that we have now gained a good opportunity to plunder the City if our Apprentises can but obtaine this present opportunity of equall power with the best Citizens to dispose of State matters, which will be a great means of mutiny, let us be wise to raise a strong commotion, least delay discover all our trechery.

Gentlemen, you see hitherto we have not prospered nor our cause, it is bad and thrives accordingly, what shall we do in the next place, I desire that every one may freely speake, that we may conclude what to doe, for now is the time or never, we and all our businesse is more and more discovered, and the more we delay the weaker we shall now be, therefore let us conclude at this time concerning the next designe.

The Answer that was made to this Speech is not yet discovered, when I heare of it, I shall publish it.

FINIS.